Media Advisory from East Timor Action Network/U.S.

For information: 1-914-428-7299

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The 29 brave East Timorese who scaled the fence of the U.S. Embassy compound in Jakarta are now in Lisbon, after spending more than 10 days in a parking lot at the embassy. Their courageous and inspired action riveted world attention on the situation of their compatriots in East Timor, who have endured nearly 19 years of Indonesian invasion, occupation, and genocide.

High U.S. officials, including President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher promised the East Timorese and the media that they 29 could stay in the compound as long as they wanted to, and would not be pressured to leave. Nevertheless, U.S. personnel cruelly and deliberately made their visitors as uncomfortable as possible, and made it clear to them that they were unwelcome. Although we are relieved and gratified that the 29 have arrived safely in Lisbon, their treatment at the hands of American government personnel was abominable:

*** They were given no water for two days. After that, they were only given white rice twice a day and nothing else -- barely enough to prevent starvation.**
*** They were given no shelter from the rain and other weather.**
*** They were repeatedly exposed to death threats and other taunts from the hundreds of Indonesian military personnel just outside the Embassy fence.**
*** American officials strongly urged them to leave the compound, using a range of psychological pressure tactics.**

As American citizens, we find these actions abhorrent, totally opposite to the statements of the President and the Secretary of State.

Charles Scheiner, National Coordinator
East Timor Action Network/United States
P.O. Box 1182, White Plains, New York 10602 USA
Phone 1-914-428-7299 (25 Nov. only 1-401-831-7548). fax 1-914-428-7383
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To: Luisa Teotonia Pereira
From : Charles Scheiner
Pages: 1
For Information Call: Charles Scheiner
At: 914-428-7299
Fax Number : 914-428-7383